

Community Relations -- Shared Values and Common Interest

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Community Relations Division was created to encourage local resolution of problems and to foster better community relations throughout the state. This unit uses conference, conciliation and persuasion to bring together cross-sections of people to resolve disputes involving discrimination in police relations, education, business practices, public accommodations, and other non-employment issues.

Community Relations:

- ◆ Serves as a resource for South Carolinians to seek solutions to problems encountered due to social or institutionalized practices that have a divisive impact.
- ◆ Investigates complaints rising from alleged violations of the Equal Enjoyment and Privileges to Public Accommodations Act and any other allegations of discrimination occurring in sectors other than employment or housing.

The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission has worked to link state government to community groups by assisting in the establishment of or the continued operation of existing **Community Relations Councils**. Upon request from an existing council or committee, Community Relations will send members of its staff to offer support, technical assistance, and resources. The staff advises councils on identifying problems, setting priorities in program planning and development, and developing funding processes for community projects.

What is a Community Relations Council?

A Community Relations Council is the gathering of individuals who want to resolve problems in the local community. The common concern requires voluntary participation of the community as a whole. *An effective council is also able to identify and act on potential problems.*

Does Your Community Need A Community Relations Council?

- ◆ Are there problems in your community that citizens and organizations can study /recommend strategies for the prevention of a future crisis and the promotion of good relations?
- ◆ Is there a human need for housing, employment, education, transportation and health service?
- ◆ Is there an available conciliatory body for resolving tension and conflict in an emergency or crisis situation?

Community Relations is responsible for eight program areas:

- (1) Establishing and consulting with local Community Relations Councils;
- (2) Processing of non-employment complaints;
- (3) Coordination of activities with the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights;
- (4) Federal Highway Administration Survey;
- (5) South Carolina Project Notification and Review System (A-95 Process);
- (6) South Carolina Emergency Preparedness programs;
- (7) Technical assistance and referrals; and,
- (8) Enforcement of the South Carolina Equal Enjoyment and Privileges to Public Accommodations Act.

Community Relations conducts investigations under the Investigative Process of Section 1-30-90(e) & Public Accommodations. Additionally, the division receives and reviews all requests for federal funding/loans, environmental impact reports, and highway projects through the S.C. Project Notification & Review System to ensure South Carolina guidelines are met.

Investigative Process of Section 1-30-90(e) & Public Accommodations:

Public accommodations discrimination complaints may be filed on the basis of race, color, religion, age (40 and above), sex, and/or national origin. The statutory limitation for filing a public accommodation complaint is three (3) years. The types of businesses covered include the following: inns, hotels, motels, restaurants, hospitals, clinics, theaters, concert halls, billiard parlors, barrooms, golf courses, sports arenas, stadiums, or other places of amusement, exhibition, recreation, or entertainment.

Complaints based on Public Accommodations are largely based on race, and respondents are typically food service establishments. Complaints received also involve the health care industry. These complaints are based upon race with the issue being triage and/or method of payment for services rendered by the health care professional. While race is the primary basis for 90(e) complaints, one of the most significant areas where 90(e) complaints are received is sexual harassment.

S. C. Project Notification Review System (Executive Order 12372)

Entities seeking federal assistance for projects and /or programs (construction and non-construction), submit proposals to the national contract office in Washington, D.C. Those proposals are listed in the federal domestic book and are referred to the state(s) affected for a detailed review. The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission receives and reviews all proposals to ensure compliance to South Carolina guidelines.

HOW TO CONTACT THE COMMISSION:

You may call us at:

(803) 737-7800 or
Toll Free 1-800-521-0725 (in state)
Fax: (803) 253-4191

Monday through Friday
From 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Web Address:
www.state.sc.us/schac

Email Address:
Information@schac.state.sc.us

Address:
South Carolina
Human Affairs Commission
Community Relations
Post Office Box 4490
Columbia, South Carolina 29204-4490



How to Organize Your Community:

- **Identify** the **NEEDS** and **GOALS** of your community.
- **Establish** **PRIORITIES** by importance and by timing.
- **Develop** **CONFIDENCE** and goodwill within your group.
- **Find** **RESOURCES** (money, people, and materials).
- **Take** **ACTION** to accomplish goals.
- **Evaluate** **EFFORTS** (for future use).



WHERE DO WE BEGIN WITH GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA?



AT THE:

**SOUTH CAROLINA
HUMAN AFFAIRS
COMMISSION**

**RAYMOND BUXTON, II
COMMISSIONER**